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SUBJECT: OBASANJO ON THE DRC, NIGERIA, AND AFRICAN ISSUES

Classified By: Ambassador Susan E. Rice, for Reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

(C) 1. SUMMARY. In his final briefing to the Security Council as Special Envoy to the Great Lakes on November 9, former Nigerian President Obasanjo said the situation in the Great Lakes region had improved in the last year. He noted the CNDP was no longer a threat to the DRC government, and said he was pleased by the rapprochement between the DRC and Rwanda. He also noted the need to fix the entire DRC security sector. Ambassador Rice called for an end to impunity, especially within the DRC army, and she was joined by all Council members in thanking Obasanjo for his efforts. In a private meeting on November 10 between Rice and Obasanjo, he said President Kabila needed help, and was not well-served by those around him. On Nigeria, Obasanjo told Rice that someone other than President Yar'Auda (but also a northerner) should be elected in 2011. Obasanjo also shared his idea for a group of African elders to help the younger generation become responsible leaders. END SUMMARY.

OBASANJO NOTES THE NEED TO IMPLEMENT THE MARCH 23 AGREEMENTS

12. (SBU) Former Nigerian President Olusegun Obasanjo briefed the Security Council on November 9 in an open session on his year's work as Special Envoy to the Great Lakes Region. He said that he would "step back" from his efforts, and noted the positive changes that occurred as a result of his work, including the incorporation of the CNDP into the DRC army (FARDC) and the rapprochement between Rwanda and the DRC, including the exchange of ambassadors. He said the FDLR threat had been considerably reduced, and that many refugees and IDPs were returning to their homes. He noted, however, that many elements of the March 23 Agreements remained to be implemented, including establishment of a national reconciliation mechanism and reforms to the electoral law, good governance, and control of natural resources. He said the Congolese must be encouraged and empowered to be architects of their own future, since lasting peace must have local ownership.

OBASANJO AND MKAPA "ON ALERT" IF NEEDED

13. (SBU) Obasanjo also said that he and his co-facilitator former President Benjamin Mkapa would remain "on alert" should the region need to call on their good offices again. He said that he and Mkapa would submit their final report to the African Union (AU) during its January Summit and recommended retooling his office in Nairobi to be a small liaison post for the region. Obasanjo suggested an "umbrella approach" to bring together the UN, the AU, the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR), and international development partners in a concerted effort to strengthen governance institutions in the DRC.

RICE CALLS FOR AN END TO IMPUNITY, THANKS THE ENVOYS

14. (SBU) Continuing the meeting in closed consultations, Ambassador Rice thanked President Obasanjo for his efforts and stressed the significant contributions both he and President Mkapa made to the peace process in the Great Lakes region. She also stressed that there must be an end to impunity, especially regarding the government and members of the FARDC. She noted that the U.S. Special Envoy to the Great Lakes Howard Wolpe looked forward to continuing the work with bilateral partners that was started by Obasanjo and Mkapa. All Council members joined Rice in expressing their gratitude to Mkapa and Obasanjo. Costa Rican PR Urbina seconded Ambassador Rice's concern that impunity at the highest level must be addressed. The U.S., Costa Rica, Turkey, and Mexico all called for improved vetting mechanisms for the FARDC.

FRANCE LOBBIES FOR SARKOZY'S ECONOMIC COOPERATION PLAN

15. (SBU) French PR Araud warned of the plunder of the DRC's natural resources, and said France supported conditionality for the UN's cooperation with the FARDC. Araud also lauded President Sarkozy's regional economic cooperation initiative announced in March, saying the region's riches could be turned into a positive force for peace.

OBASANJO SAYS THE ENTIRE SECURITY SECTOR MUST BE FIXED

16. (SBU) Responding to questions, Obasanjo commented that

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security would only come with a complete development of a viable security sector, including the army, the police, the judiciary, and a responsible corrections system. He called on international partners to help the DRC, but cautioned that "warlordism" was a constant threat. Regarding a question about Kabila's political will for positive change, Obasanjo said it did not matter how much will Kabila had if he had no means to exercise it. Obasanjo also warned that if Sudan is broken up following its referendum, the fallout could also cause the DRC to split apart. In conclusion, Obasanjo said lasting peace in the Great Lakes can only be achieved if there is regional social and economic development.

OBASANJO ON KABILA AND THE DRC

17. (C) In a private subsequent meeting on November 10, Obasanjo told Ambassador Rice that the DRC lacked the institutions for governance. He said that President Kabila had the disability of appearing to not be "Congolese" (since Kabila was from the east) and had not visited other areas in the DRC, aside from the Kivus. Obasanjo said he thought at one point that Kabila was overwhelmed by his presidency, and needs to be helped by the international community. He also said that Kabila was not so forthcoming as Rwandan President Kagame, and that he wished Kagame were in the DRC and Kabila in Rwanda, due to their respective leadership attributes. He commented that Kabila was very sensitive and needed to develop self-confidence, but that would be difficult to do because he was not well-served by the people around him. While discussing other potential leaders for the DRC, Obasanjo said that former Speaker Vital Kamerhe was smart, and opined that Kamerhe may one day return to the political stage.

NIGERIA NEEDS SOMEONE OTHER THAN YAR'AUDA

18. (C) Obasanjo said that Nigeria can't afford eight years of President Yar'Auda. Ambassador Rice replied with a smile, "Well, that's your fault, Mr. President." Obasanjo didn't deny his role in Yar'Auda's ascendancy and received the joke

in good humor. Obasanjo noted Yar'Auda's health continued to be an issue, and that he was once again receiving dialysis for his kidneys. He said Yar'Auda's successor must come from the north for the election in 2011, but serve for only one term, since the informal agreement would then dictate the need for a southern Nigerian to become president in 2015. Ambassador Rice suggested a female president could be beneficial, transformative and ground-breaking. Obasanjo asked for suggestions of Northern Women. He said, unconvincingly, that he would not be a "king-maker" for the Nigerian election, and emphasized his worry that there was no leadership left in his country. When asked about the situation in the Delta region, Obasanjo said industries were closing or divesting and moving to Ghana, and that Nigeria needed to evolve to remain economically viable.

#### "DYNASTIC DEMOCRACIES" A PROBLEM FOR AFRICA

¶9. (C) Obasanjo said he counted at least 14 African leaders that were currently in power, or attempting to hold onto it, through a trend towards "dynastic democracy," i.e. putting one's son in office via the electoral process. He lamented that coups would most likely follow those who gained or held onto power in this way.

#### PLAN FOR AFRICAN "ELDERS" GROUP AND A TRUST FOR AFRICA'S YOUNG LEADERS

¶10. (C) Obasanjo said he wanted to create a group of African "elders" to help address the concerns of the continent. He thought Mozambique's Chissano, South Africa's Mbeki, Tanzania's Mkapa, Mali's Konare and Botswana's Masire or Mojae could join him in creating a forum if he can find the funds. He said the elders should encourage a new generation of young Africans to take up the mantle of responsible leadership. Rice and Obasanjo mused that such a "generation-skipping trust," could avoid the corrupt, current ruling age bracket, and focus on youth, and could create a trustworthy cadre of leaders for the future. Rice

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offered her encouragement for this next generational engagement.

Rice